

## **St Gabriel's, Bounds Green**

### **The Good Shepherd, Berwick Road**

A Pastoral Scheme (passed in 1982), brought together and joined the former parishes of St Michael, Wood Green with St Gabriel, Bounds Green & St Michael-at-Bowes, making the present Parish.

It was decided by the Bishop of Edmonton (following a thorough consultation process), that the scheme to build a new church at Bounds Green (on the old St Gabriel's site) should not go ahead, and that the mission building of the Good Shepherd, Berwick Road should no longer hold his Bishops Licence allowing worship to be held there.

The missionary and evangelistic work of the parish therefore continues from the two strong churches which exist - St Michael, Wood Green and St Michael-at-Bowes.

## **St Gabriel's Church**

St Gabriel's was declared redundant under Bishop Westwood and later demolished for structural reasons. St Gabriel's became part of the new parish of Wood Green, as an alternative to simply being closed at that point. The Wood Green Team Ministry was also set up at that time to minister to the newly formed parish which included three church centres and a mission building (The Good Shepherd, Berwick Road).

Plans were drawn up to build a new church for St Gabriel's by bringing in developers who would use some of the site for housing, whilst providing a church building within the scheme

The project suffered setbacks, and at least two schemes failed. The Edmonton Area Pastoral Committee agreed to keep the project on-line by granting a substantial injection of cash. The Barnet Partnership eventually took on the project as a self-funding scheme. Over the years the congregation of St Gabriel's worshipped in their church hall, but with gradually reducing numbers - approximately 27 attending mass (as at March/April 2000).

Just after Christmas 1997 the builders walked off site having not been paid for a considerable amount of extra work they had been asked to do by Haringey Council Engineers on the foundations of the church. The Barnet Partnership ceased trading leaving the Diocese without the planned church building and with little or no chance of recovering the project, as it was discovered that the developer had underestimated the costs by a considerable amount

In the light of this situation and because of a review of issues concerning clergy deployment in the Diocese in the future, a thorough consultation was held involving the Parochial Church Council and the Bishop's Area Council to discern the proper way forward. The Archdeacon of Hampstead led a very careful assessment of the whole situation to balance the needs of the parish against the resources available. As a result of this the Bishop of Edmonton decided to accept the conclusions of the Area Council to centre the ministry in the parish of Wood Green in the two existing churches i.e. St Michael Wood Green and St Michael-at-Bowes, Palmerston Road – and therefore not to continue to pursue the project to build a new church on the site at Durnsford Road.

## **The Good Shepherd**

These questions also raised doubts about the future viability of the Good Shepherd mission building (a building licensed for worship), which were addressed during the same consultation process. With a tiny worshipping community averaging six at mass on a Sunday, and in close proximity to four existing parish churches, the Bishop's Council considered this not to be the best use of pastoral resources in the parish.

Inevitably the Area Council during its deliberations expressed their deep regret at having to take these painful decisions, but considered that the pastoral, missionary and evangelistic needs of the parish could be served perfectly well by two strong centres.